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The Devil in France[1]. The Tragedy of Spanish Republicans and French Policy after the Civil War (1936-1945)

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Abstract

Among the many human tragedies Europe endured during the 20th century, the Spanish Civil War ranks high among the events that most strongly affected our collective future. France was deeply affected by this historical tragedy, since it received four successive waves of immigrants between 1936 and 1939. The episode known as the *retirada* [retreat] led to the exile and arrival in France of around a half a million individuals of all ages and all social conditions in the space of a few weeks.

Today the subject of the exodus, then exile, of the Spanish Republicans is well known as a result of the work of historians. But important questions remain. This chapter first looks at the role of the Franco-Spanish frontier during the Civil War, and then, against this background, investigates the causes of the inadequate and even humiliating reception of the Spanish refugees. It attempts to understand why France, known for its tradition of hospitality, was unprepared to deal with the emergency and, indeed, officially reacted with indifference or contempt, enforcing discriminatory measures against the exiled soldiers and civilian population.

De toutes les tragédies humaines que l'Europe a traversées au cours du 20e siècle, la guerre d'Espagne figure hélas en bonne place parmi celles qui ont le plus fortement marqué notre destin collectif. Plus que tout autre pays, la France a fait l'expérience indirecte de ce drame historique en devenant la terre d'accueil de quatre vagues migratoires successives entre 1936 et 1939, la dernière étant de loin la plus importante du point de vue numérique. En effet, la mal nommée retirada *– littéralement la retraite militaire – a entraîné l'exil massif d'environ un demi-million d'individus de tous âges et de toutes conditions vers le pays voisin à travers les Pyrénées en l'espace de quelques jours, au mieux quelques semaines. Bien que la question de l'exode républicain espagnol, puis de l'exil soit aujourd'hui bien connue grâce au travail des historiens et aux publications nombreuses touchant à ce sujet (mémoires, autobiographies...), elle continue de poser des questions, de nous interroger, non seulement sur les causes premières qui ont occasionné cet épisode douloureux, mais aussi et surtout sur le sort qui a été réservé aux centaines de milliers d'hommes, de femmes et d'enfants à leur arrivée sur le sol de France. Comment expliquer que la République française, connue dans le monde entier pour sa traditionnelle hospitalité, n'ait manifesté officiellement qu'indifférence ou mépris à leur égard? Comment interpréter l'impréparation des autorités civiles et militaires face à un déluge humain annoncé, l'improvisation des "camps sur la plage" et le traitement humiliant infligé aux soldats républicains? Cette communication vise à évoquer la question frontalière dans les relations franco-espagnoles au cours de la guerre civile, à montrer combien l'exode massif de 1939 aurait pu être anticipé et pourquoi la France a si mal accueilli les réfugiés espagnols sous la pression des événements pendant les années de guerre.*

Of all the human tragedies that Europe endured over the 20th century, the Spanish Civil War unfortunately ranks high among the events that most strongly affected our collective future. More than any other country, France was affected by this historical tragedy, although indirectly, since it received four successive waves of immigrants between 1936 and 1939, the last of which was by far the largest in number. In fact, the episode known as the *retirada* [retreat] led to the massive exile of around half a million individuals of all ages and all social conditions towards their French neighbours across the Pyrenees in the space of a few weeks.

Although today the subject of the exodus, then exile, of the Spanish Republicans is well known as a result of the work of historians as well as numerous publications which treat this subject (memoirs, autobiographies, etc.), several questions remain about the causes that led to this painful episode in European history and the subsequent circumstances which surround the arrival of hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children on French soil. In fact, how can we explain that the Republic of France, known throughout the world for its tradition of hospitality, officially reacted with indifference or even contempt towards the refugees, enforcing without delay discriminatory measures against them? How can we understand the lack of preparation on the part of both civil and military authorities when faced with this predictable human deluge, and their improvisation of "beach camps" and the humiliating treatment of both Republican soldiers and civilians? This chapter aims, first, to discuss the role of the frontier in Franco-Spanish relations during the Civil War; second, to show to what extent the massive exodus of 1939 could have been anticipated; and finally, to explain why France, under the pressure of events during the wartime, received the Spanish refugees so badly.

The French population immediately perceived the Spanish Civil War as a tragedy of the highest order. News reports on the radio and above all in local media, especially the press, made the population aware of the deterioration of the political climate following the Spanish elections in February 1936, which were marked by the victory of the *Frente popular* (Popular Front). This was especially the case for the newspaper "La Dépêche" that had maintained permanent correspondents on the Iberian Peninsula for a number of years, and thus the newspaper had covered events in Spain with particular attention since the creation of the Second Republic in April 1931. The population's concern only grew, however, over the years, mainly because of the deepening of the political crisis produced by the futile military upheaval in 1932 – the famous *Sanjurjada* – and the failed revolt of the Asturias in October 1934[2]. Two years later, the climate of scepticism in France with regard to the future of democracy in Spain seemed stronger than ever, despite the generally relaxed, calm atmosphere on the eve of the vote and daily declarations of sympathy and support for the Republican cause[3]. The official reports issued by diplomatic representatives were hardly more reassuring than the news from the press correspondents, judging by the cautious reports by Ambassador Jean Herbette, who was far, however, from exaggerating the situation[4].

The situation radically changed nonetheless with the military uprising on 18 July 1936. Although Herbette was still prudent about the possible outcome of the insurrection, because of the resounding failure that had followed the previous attempt, there could be no doubt that the Spanish Republic found itself at a crossroads[5]. Contrary to the major part of the French press however, especially the business-owners' press, always quick to denounce the dangers of the *Frente popular* in Spain as well as in France[6], Herbette still wanted to believe that Giral's new government would be able to re-establish order and assure the normal functioning of the young democracy.

Reality proved unfortunately to be different after the fall back of the rebel troops to the Basque region and Navarre and, above all, the brutal repression that rained down in the area now under the control of the Nationalists. Jean Herbette's report dated 23 October shows precisely the dangerous shift of reactions in Navarre in the first days of the Civil War:

> The arrest of well-known persons who were known to belong to the organization of the UGT [*Unión General de Trabajadores*], of the CNT [*Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores*] and the Republican Left began in the very first hours. Afterwards, arrests of whole groups of people took place in cafés and bars. The prisons of the city and the villages were soon full. Numerous people fled. At the same time, searches of homes increased. These arrests and home searches were carried out by Carlist and fascist organizations that were not acting under any authority. [...] Later, rumours circulated that detailed documents had been discovered at the homes of certain members of extremist parties, concerning an imminent uprising, with lists of people in the province on the political right who were to be killed. [...] These rumours coincided with the first victims from the combat front and the news published in the newspapers about the atrocities committed in Barcelona, Madrid, etc... creating an intensely emotional climate. From that moment, shootings began everywhere[7].

For the French population observing this unleashing of violence, on one side as much as on the other, the reality of a full-scale Civil War soon became apparent following the offensive of August 1936 in Guipúzcoa, in the Basque region. The bombing carried out by the Republican navy, as well as the bombings of Irún and San Sebastián by the rebel air force – supplied by Nazi Germany – led to the death of many civilians and created an outbreak of panic among the populace. As Hugh Thomas wrote, "the battle took place under a scorching sun and at such small distance from the French border that Beorlegui [commander of the Nationalist forces] had to forbid his soldiers to shoot towards the east" [8].

Whether it was the brutal repression authorized by General Mola in this same month of August[9], or the terror provoked by the advance of insurgent troops and the fear of continued bombings, the first wave of the exodus towards the French border occurred in the following weeks, triggered by the *coup d'état*. Although it is difficult to provide precise figures, for want of detailed studies on this first population movement, we can estimate at several thousand the number of people who had to cross the frontier between July and September 1936. In the Bearn region, the city of Laruns received the first refugees starting on 19 July. Among them were Borderas, the Socialist deputy of Jaca and mayor of the same town, as well as the mayor of Canfranc, who were only able to save their lives thanks to their quick thinking:

> They were working at the Town Hall when the soldiers invaded. Without wasting a second, they jumped into a car and fled as fast as they could towards the border, taking absolutely nothing with them. [...] Soon after, the orders of arrest arrived, but the refugees had already arrived in French territory...[10]

While there were nearly 240 refugees in the convoys which made it through to the city of Pau in the beginning of September, it is likely that several hundred, and probably even several thousand, of Spanish Republicans were able to reach French territory by land from Hendaya, Irún, and San Sebastián, evacuated in haste by the soldiers and fighters for the Republic, but also by sea from the Cantabrian provinces which would soon find themselves isolated territorially[11]. Starting in September, numerous groups reached the French shore, particularly through the ports of the Gironde, following the instructions of the French authorities who wanted to channel and control this large influx of population[12].

The same situation occurred on the other side of the Pyrenees, in Aragon and above all in Catalonia, where several thousand people, in particular priests, nuns, and families considered to be on the political right, tried to find refuge in French territory in order to escape popular vigilante mobs and the settling of the scores after the military uprising, as described in the newspaper "L'Illustration", with a certain sadness, on 22 August:

> The Civil War is spreading in Spain with, on one side as much as the other, a similar heroism but –alas! – an increasing ferocity: truly, it seems as though we are returning to the barbarism of past centuries, to the terrible Albigensian Crusade, or the bloody fanaticism of the Wars of Religion. The Spanish trag-

edy disgraces itself by its massacres of hostages, by its mass executions of conquered people. On both sides, it is the same excuse: retaliation[13].

According to Bartolomé Bennassar, who rightly reminds us of the forgotten exodus of the 'political right', there were more than 2,000 refugees in Andorra at the end of the month of August, while several hundred Spanish people were also able to reach the French ports of Port-Vendres, Marseille, or Sète by sea[14]. It is also necessary to note, however, that the violence perpetrated in the Republican areas, although equally reprehensible, was more frequently the result of isolated, sporadic incidents often linked to the failed uprisings in Barcelona and Valencia, for example. In addition, orders were given very quickly by the FAI (*Federación Anarquista Ibérica*) and the CNT to suppress such acts of violence as contrary to their revolutionary principles – an attitude which contrasts entirely with the orders given by Franco and Mola[15].

In all, nearly 15,000 individuals reached France in the autumn of 1936 – many of whom were civilians, of course, but above all, there were thousands of men who were of fighting age, who hurried to return to Spain through Catalonia and Aragon in order to continue the fight against the rebels[16].

This first exodus allowed France to realize the dimension of the conflict that was unfolding right under the eyes of the military and *gendarmes* stationed on the border, and to put in place the legal and administrative framework that would later serve as a reference point for the arrival of new immigrants. Although Franco-Spanish relations were still governed by the old agreement of 7 January 1862 regarding population exchanges, this text made no explicit reference to agricultural or industrial workers – by far the most numerous among Spanish refugees – nor to political exiles. However, the international commitments that France had signed required the country to accept foreign nationals and forbid all attempts at return or expulsion, which the first instructions sent to the *préfets* of French border *département*s on 20 July and 6 August 1936 confirmed[17]. In reality, as Javier Rubio has stated, these first regulatory steps enabled the French government – from the very first weeks of the conflict – to establish the two fundamental principles which were to guide policies concerning Spanish refugees in the years to come. The first principle was to assist, as much as possible, the return to Spain for those who wished to go back, even leaving them the freedom to choose the place at which they would re-cross the border. Even the possibility to live in France temporarily was also guaranteed by this same principle, not only for humanitarian reasons but also because it was supposed to take into account non-combatants, such as women, children, and the elderly who were external, so to speak, to the Civil War. The second principle, which recalled the precedents that had been applied since the Carlist wars, aimed to distance the refugee population from the border zones for both political and material reasons. In fact, the presence of political opponents to the Spanish government at Spain's door, whether they were the partisans of Don Carlos in the 19th century[18], the Spanish Republicans and Anarchists until 1931, or the current fighters of the *Frente popular*, the French authorities had to do whatever necessary to avoid the slightest conflict with the Spanish groups in power, or any direct involvement in the conflict. Yet, removing the refugees from the border zones also responded simply to practical considerations, primarily the need to distribute the burden of the Spanish exiles more equally so that the frontier *département*s did not have to bear the brunt of this new burden alone[19].

After the failure of rebel forces to take Madrid in the winter of 1936, the military effort then turned above all to the Basque region during the following year. Cut off from its Republican base, and with its vital strategic importance due to its economic potential, northern Spain suffered a wave of offensives in Biscay, which led to the destruction of Durango from the first day of the attack on 31 March 1937, and above all of Guernica on 26 April, then finally the fall of Bilbao on 18 June, despite the fact that the *Cinturón de Hierro* [Iron Belt] was thought to be impregnable.

In the weeks that followed, tens of thousands of Spanish people, perhaps 120,000 according to Javier Rubio, fled the northern region by sea on any kind of vessel available – small boats, trawlers, dredging boats – first of all from the Basque region, then from Santander[20], to reach the French ports of Bordeaux, Pauillac, La Rochelle, and even Lorient. As with the first wave in 1936, not enough research has been done to calculate with any certainty the actual size of this wave of refugees, and the estimations vary greatly[21]. Two things, however, remain certain: first, the population displacement was significantly greater than that of the preceding summer and second, the desire to fight against the rebel troops had remained intact, despite heavy losses inflicted by the enemy – some 45,000 combat victims – since the end of March 1937. In the Ariège *département*, for example, where a large number of Spanish Republicans had taken refuge, nearly 85 percent of combatants stated that they wanted to return and fight as quickly as possible[22].

These events of course had consequences for France, both domestically and in its foreign relations. In concrete terms, the massive arrival of Spanish Republicans was hardly welcomed by a public opinion strongly scarred by the economic crisis and a general climate of xenophobia. The vaguely named, so-called "Spanish question" became ever more pressing as the Civil War dragged on. As Robert de Beauplan pointed out in the daily paper "L'Illustration", on 17 July 1937, "It has now been one year since the war in Spain began, and to this day we still cannot make any predictions about the outcome"[23]. This assessment was equally shared by the French government led by the *Front populaire*, which was increasingly shaken up by inner power struggles, resulting in Léon Blum's fall from power in June 1937 and his replacement by Camille Chautemps. The events in Spain were, incidentally, directly responsible for his fall, because the policy of non-intervention, which from the beginning was doomed to fail, had aroused sharp opposition from the Communist Party (PCF), but also within the Socialist Party (SFIO) and the *Parti radical*, although they formed part of the majority[24]. For Jacques Duclos, writing in "L'Humanité", a communist newspaper, on 15 January 1937, the fascist threat was real:

> In its hatred of the Spanish Republic, and so great is its devotion to Hitler, the opposition does not hesitate to distort *Mein Kampf*, which declares categorically, however, that 'bastardized and Jewified France' is its natural enemy which must be destroyed 'whoever its leaders are.' I must also state that the opposition has banded together with unusual allies in order to lead a campaign against Republican Spain, to try to make people believe that the French Communist Party wants war. They have called 'intervention' what in fact was our concern to respect international law; they have labelled 'desire for war' what in fact was great political insight, for the maintenance and the reinforcement of peace. [...] Concerned with maintaining the peace, that is to say, in particular the independence of the Spanish Republic and the security of France, but equally worried to maintain the *Front populaire*, whom the enemies of our people want to destroy at all costs, we have said: ALL FOR REPUBLICAN SPAIN! ALL FOR THE *FRONT POPULAIRE*![25]

The ideal of solidarity towards the Spanish republicans was, however, undermined by government measures adopted beginning in April 1937, which included reinforcing the controls on the Pyrenean frontier, and above all re-introducing the consular visa, which authorized the expulsion of anyone who did not have such a visa. In May instructions were handed down concerning the lodging of Spanish refugees which certainly limited the policy of welcome adopted by the *Front populaire*. While the French state continued, of course, to assert its willingness to "completely fulfil its obligations towards humanity", at the same time, it expressed the will to "strictly maintain public order within its territories", to forbid the free circulation of the Spanish population outside the *départements* in which they had been housed, especially movements towards border regions, and to refuse officially to finance the housing camps[26]. This hardening of policy was not affected by the change in government, rather the contrary, since this change did not affect the Minister of

the Interior who held the position, Marx Dormoy, nor his tendencies towards restrictive policies. Thus the "mandatory repatriation of all Spanish refugees, excepting the sick", that is to say, not only men, but also women and children, was put into effect on 29 September 1937 without hesitation. This policy can probably be explained by the large number of Spanish republicans settled in France – from 50,000-60,000 at the beginning of autumn, which represented a heavy burden for the French state and the towns that were ordered to accept these refugees, whether they wanted to or not. Blum's government had already allocated 13 million francs for the Spanish Republicans, to which 55 million francs were added over the year 1937[27]. Yet, hostile reactions to such a retreat from republican principles came from pro-government groups and helped soften these radical measures, thanks to a new directive dated 27 November, which allowed the refugees to remain in France, under the condition that they either had sufficient financial resources or were taken in by third parties citizens, "with exceptions being made however, for women, children, the elderly and the sick who may still be housed at public expense"[28].

The growing presence of Spanish Republicans in France was of course also linked with the international diplomatic context, in that the crossing of the French border became an essential issue in the discussions of the Committee for Non-Intervention[29]. For many months, in fact, the powers represented in this group tried in vain to neutralize the Spanish conflict; that is, to prevent any outside interference. The withdrawal of volunteers enrolled in international brigades particularly worried the French government, due to the potential risks for the escalation of violence, as a number of reports from Rome and Valence in March 1937 show[30]. Yet the need to be able to guarantee exterior neutrality through a system of border controls was as indispensable as the withdrawal of foreign volunteers. As Charles Corbin, the French ambassador in London, tried to explain to his Spanish counterpart, Pablo de Azcárate: "It is only [border] control which can prevent the Italian government from continuing to send reinforcements of both men and materiel, the effect of which is to make the conflict drag on. Once this control is in effect in practice", he added, "the English government, as well as ours, will be ready to use all their means to resolve the problem of the volunteers"[31].

The crisis provoked by the bombing of the German cruiser Leipzig, the following 15 and 18 June, was in fact not far from bringing Nazi Germany into an open conflict against the Spanish Republicans and of provoking an uncontrollable escalation in the war. This led to the acceleration of diplomatic processes which would lead, some weeks later, to the adoption of a compromise outlined by the British as a base for further discussion[32], and then to the signing of the Nyon Agreements, on 14 September, which were supposed to put an end to repeated violations of international law in the Mediterranean[33]. Although this 'Mediterranean plan' was designed to deal with maritime problems, it is clear that contraband and the passage of volunteers were also occurring by overland routes, which led to the implementation, starting in November, of a veritable barrier plan, which, according to its promoter Marx Dormoy, would ensure the perfect sealing of the frontier. In the case of the Ariège *département*, directly involved in this measure, military and civil authorities would divide the various roles in order to guarantee the effectiveness of the ministerial decisions, with the mobilization of Republican guard patrols, infantry groups, and reserves which formed an interlocking net 80 kilometres wide[34].

The problem of the Spanish refugees, however, was not going to be solved during the year 1937, nor in the following year of 1938, despite forced or required deportations. Moreover, the attitude of the French authorities raises certain questions. Could it justify itself, as Bartolomé Bennassar asserts, by the freedom to cross the frontier or because "the outcome of the conflict remains very uncertain" (sic)?[35] This is rather questionable, especially when reading the intentions of Marx Dormoy who stated in September 1937: "I have decided to order them to leave our territory". In

addition, it was often not necessary to force them to return, since most of the men still had the wish to fight, particularly the revolutionaries who were the most active and thus also the most undesirable for French authorities. Moreover, crossing the frontier did not prove to be easy, since the Republican Spanish government was strictly controlling the entry of people, a practice which was intended to eradicate the Nationalist 'Fifth column'.

> Whether leaving or entering, it is now necessary to pass five or six barriers, with multiple checks by customs, governments, police, etc. Inside a zone of twenty kilometres from the French border, the population has been evacuated. No one has the right to circulate without the most detailed justifications, and under threat of the most serious penalties. It is almost entirely forbidden for Spanish nationals to leave Spain. The entry into Spain of foreigners is subject to multiple investigations, and nearly prohibitive instructions have been given to Embassies and Consulates. At departure, one must appear before the Commissioner General of Ports and Borders five days before the proposed date of departure, and the only place for all of Spain where this can be done is in Barcelona[36].

The 'Spanish Question' remained thus unresolved at the beginning of 1938, not only because foreign volunteers could no longer leave the Republican zone, but also because it would have been dangerous to force them to leave as long as the Germans and Italians had no intention of doing the same, that is, recalling their volunteers on Spanish soil, until after Franco had won! More serious still, the offensive which occurred in Aragon starting in the winter of 1937 and culminating in the Battle of Teruel in January-February 1938, led to a third exodus towards France of nearly 7,000 people, and included a part of the Republican Army, in particular the 43rd Division which had been pushed out of Bielsa by the Nationalist Army. In contradiction to the official orders, which continued to impose barriers at the frontier, on the French side sympathizers began to organize themselves, primarily through the departmental association of the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT), to come to the aid of soldiers and especially civilians from the valley of Cinca. Convoys were organized to send medical and food supplies into Spanish territory, but bombings by Franco's Air Force ended up pushing the militias and civilian groups back into the French Haute-Pyrenees, especially to the towns of Arreau, Argelès-Gazost and Luz-Saint-Sauveur[37]. The minister of foreign affairs, who was informed of events by Lieutenant Colonel Morel, military attaché assigned to Barcelona, grew increasingly worried, as did the general public opinion, with a great deal of discussion about the fighting and the exodus of Spanish republicans[38] towards the French borders. Even so, however, the deportations towards Catalonia (or sometimes towards Nationalist Spain) were massive, as photos taken at the train station in Luchon reveal.

It was, however, in this context – or rather, because of this context – that the government led by the *Front populaire* agreed on 17 March to re-open the border at the request of the Spanish Prime Minister Juan Negrín, who had come to plead the cause of Republican Spain. The frontier had been closed by Camille Chautemps after the departure of French socialist ministers from the government and the creation of a new cabinet on 19 January. The catastrophic consequences of this decision on the Republican Army's ability to resist can be clearly seen in Aragon, once the shipment of arms coming from the Soviet Union suddenly dried up[39]. This sudden reversal of policy by the French authorities can be wholly attributed to the return of Léon Blum at the head of the government on 13 March, and his desire to respond to the expansionist policy of Nazi Germany by an act of solidarity towards Spain. In other words, although it was too late for Austria, it was still possible to do something for Spain, as well as Czechoslovakia, which was also threatened[40]. Moreover, the arguments given by Juan Negrín could only have encouraged Léon Blum and the new minister of foreign affairs, Joseph Paul-Boncour[41], to support Republican requests:

> When are the democratic nations going to understand that Spain fights also for them and for liberty? The efforts undertaken to organize an effective army with great leaders enabled victories such as that of

> Teruel. [...] In the middle of the French Empire, on the routes of the British Empire, Spain constitutes a decisive element in the balance of powers which are being built and destroyed today, and who will soon face each other in a struggle for the future of Europe and for the shape of civilization. [...] But this will only be possible with the help of our friends. If this assistance were refused, it would then be necessary to forge our victory in 'a river of blood.' How would it be possible that bitterness not remain? The Spanish people, would they not then refuse to shed a tear during the ordeals, which will inevitably be imposed later on France? [42]

Yet, the opening of the frontier had neither tangible nor lasting effects. On the one hand, this was because the supplying of arms to the legalist forces did not improve in the slightest, as revealed by the words on 24 March of the Spanish Foreign Affairs Minister, José Giral, who worried about the interruption of Soviet deliveries:

> [...] it is undeniable that, since the beginning of the offensive in Aragon, that is, for more than two weeks, Republican Spain has not received and does not receive the massive and immediate shipments that we had declared were indispensable, and that we have asked for since the first day of this decisive battle. Why has the URSS not provided us with any aviation equipment for nearly a year? Why, since from the beginning of this terrible threat of the ongoing Italo-German offensive, which weighs heavily upon Republican Spain, have they not appeared to want to, or to have been able to, react, and have furnished almost nothing?[43]

On the other hand, the opening of the frontier was also ineffective because Blum's second term was destined to fail from the beginning – since January, President Lebrun had stated his wish to put an end, once and for all, to the *Front populaire*[44] – and Blum's days were numbered. In fact, growing social pressure, political divisions, and the open hostility of the Senate with regard to the Léon Blum's financial projects, helped to hasten his fall from power on 10 April, and opened the way for a second Daladier cabinet two days afterward[45].

This new French government crisis, in addition to putting an end definitively to the *Front populaire*, brought with it a sudden change of attitude towards Republican Spain with the departure of the socialists from the new cabinet and the shift of its centre of gravity towards the right[46]. The naming of Georges Bonnet as the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs only confirmed the legitimate worries of Barcelona in this regard, because his overt hostility for the *Front populaire*, joined with his conviction of the weakness of France if confronted by Germany, could only lead him to make decisions contrary to the interests of the Spanish Republic[47]. For Georges Bonnet, the French policy conducted in Spain could not be disassociated from that carried out more broadly in the Mediterranean, in particular towards Mussolini's Italy, and for reasons that were not only ideological; in other words, he had to try everything possible to neutralize Nationalist Spain, to distance the Italian and German powers from the Iberian peninsula, and finally to separate Italy from Germany, in accordance with the policy of appeasement advocated by Lord Halifax, who had just replaced Anthony Eden at the head of the British Foreign Office[48]. The signing of British-Italian Agreement on 16 April 1938, which signified the legal recognition of Italy's annexation of Ethiopia and the presence of a British diplomatic agent in the nationalist area of Italy since the month of November 1937[49], could have only encouraged the radical Minister Bonnet to follow their example. The territorial separation of the Spanish Republican areas since 14 April, combined with the Nationalist front guard's arrival in Vinaroz, in fact allowed him to plan quietly the abandonment of the Spanish Republic for a *rapprochement* with Franco's Spain. As Lasmatres, French Consul General in San Sebastián and advisor to Bonnet in the rebel region, states:

> Our interests compel us to be present at Burgos before the Nationalist Army takes Barcelona and, above all, before General Solchaga's troops (who operate in the Pyrenean region) completely intercept the communications between France and Spain through the French-Catalan border. We do not want

> Burgos to be able to say that the supplies in arms and ammunition to government forces through this route was stopped only thanks to the General and that, up until the last moment, against all our assurances of our real neutrality, we were helping to supply [the Republican troops][50].

In these conditions, and also accused by London that "by authorizing the transit through its territory of materiel coming from other countries [...] [France] uselessly prolongs a cruel war with all its terrible consequences"[51], the French government, in the persons of Daladier and Bonnet, decided to close the French-Spanish border on 26 May. In practical terms, the border was not completely sealed until 13 June, out of fear of hostile reactions from public opinion but also because it was hardly conceivable "that France [would] act alone if Italy did not take measures clearly establishing its good faith and its intention to definitively renounce its hold on Spain"[52]. Yet the harm had already been done, and, as Consul Lamastres had predicted, without exterior provisions of arms, the fall of the Catalan and Barcelonese front was only a question of weeks[53]. In making such a decision, the Daladier government ran another risk, that of seeing the Republican side fall back *en masse* towards its borders and thus bring about an unprecedented population displacement. Already on 19 April, the French Ambassador Erik Labonne had concluded that:

> If this kind of struggle unfolds at our doorstep, if the conflagration rages a few kilometres from our frontier, the risks that France has already incurred in the Spanish affair will hardly be diminished, nor will the possible international complications. Similarly, if the fight changes in this way, the exodus of people and troops, which has already happened in the Haute-Pyrenees and Ariège *départements*, will probably be reproduced in the Pyrenees-Orientales *département,* and on an entirely different scale[54].

The *préfet* of the Pyrenees-Orientales *département* made similar statements on 23 April, when he spoke of "the mass exodus, which will occur towards the French border" adding that "the exodus will be massive" and that its extent would be "difficult to calculate in advance"[55]. The question of population exodus appeared even more obvious, given the fact that nearly 25,000 people had already crossed the border after the collapse of the Aragonese front, and at least 10,000 of these people had remained in France. Furthermore, if we calculate the financial resources allocated by the French state since 1936, the total sum was considerable: 88 million francs. So, many factors should have led the French authorities to find alternative solutions to the reception *en masse* of Spanish refugees on French soil[56].

Yet it was the predicted fall of Catalonia in December 1938, after the battle of the Ebro, and the hasty retreat of the Popular Army from Barcelona in January 1939, which would in fact create the conditions needed to force the French government to make a decision[57]. Warned by Julio Álvarez de Vayo, Republican minister for foreign affairs, about the worrisome situation caused by "the evacuation of 150,000 people, elderly, women, and children from Barcelona", Georges Bonnet proposed on 24 January, as an attempt at a solution, not to welcome this multitude, as had been requested through the intermediary of Marcelino Pascua[58], but "to assist in the creation of a neutral zone, close to the French border, and to collaborate in supplying the civilian population who takes refuge in this zone"[59]. This idea, however, was completely unrealistic, as Marcelino Pascua had to explain two days later, as an "in-depth analysis of the situation" clearly showed that the Republican government was "absolutely unable to fully carry out such a suggestion"[60].

The inevitable consequence that resulted was of course a massive flood of the population to the surroundings of the frontier the day after Barcelona's occupation by Franco's forces on 26 January. Moreover, the Republican government had already abandoned Barcelona for Figueras three days earlier, leaving behind a city overwhelmed by bombings and desirous of seeing the war end as soon as possible[61]. The crossing of Girona heading north clearly confirmed the chaotic state of the situation and the breakdown of morale of the population. The account of Julián Zugazagoitia,

ex-Minister of the interior and under-secretary of state-at-war, under the orders of Juan Negrín since the defeat at Teruel, is, in this respect, instructive:

> The vision of Girona confirms my pessimism. What other form than this could defeat take? The State, in its most miserable form, was scattered in the streets and in the squares. Archives, tables, chairs and, in the same state of abandon, ministers, under-secretaries, directors of administrations and an anonymous mass of bureaucrats, in groups, for whom the hasty voyage, the waiting, and the cold had thrown off any sense of composure. [...] It was impossible for me to alter the agonizing sensation of an inevitable crushing defeat, when I was faced with a situation as chaotic as the one that I had right in front of my eyes. All the prestige of the government, the sole source of confidence was, like all its administrative apparatus, broken, disconnected, and insubstantial[62].

The arrival at Figueras appeared even more dramatic, with the troops of refugees, and transformed this small town into an "immense civil and military camp which proved to be impassable not only for vehicles but also for people"[63]. However, this settlement would in any case be temporary, because the inexorable advance of Franco's troops and the aerial bombings led to the evacuation of the fortress at Figueras on 4 February. In the meantime, the great exodus to the frontier and thus towards France had taken on immense proportions, in accordance with the estimations stated by Marcelino Pascua some days earlier. From 27 January thousands of people showed up at the frontier posts, but the orders from the French government were strictly applied and all entries into France remained prohibited by a double curtain composed of patrolling guards and Senegalese fighters, particularly at the cities of Cerbère and Perthus. Faced with the mass of civilians which had gathered at the border, the Minister of the Interior, Albert Sarraut, had no other choice but to allow the civilians to cross, that is, "60,000 women, 13,000 children, and 2,000 men over the age of 55"[64]. In all, according to official figures, 114,000 refugees crossed over the border between 27 and 31 January 1939, through Cerbère, Le Perthus, the pass of Ares and Bourg-Madame, and another 126,000 people between 2 and 4 February[65].

The large uncertainty remained, however, of what to do with the soldiers. In a report dated 30 January Lieutenant Colonel Henri Morel discussed the size of the Republican forces, which he estimated at between 50,000-100,000 soldiers, and above all the risk of whether these troops would cross the border by force, under the effect of terror and the bombings by the enemy; a risk for which it was necessary to prepare, even to the point of either "engaging in an actual battle to prevent them from crossing", or to "allow armed detachments to enter into France"[66]. Some days later, this military attaché's point of view had changed considerably. Morel thought, and in obvious contradiction to his earlier opinion, that the problem of Republican internment was going to come up in the very near future, and that it would perhaps be possible to integrate part of the Republican army into the French forces[67]. This apparent paradox is probably a result of the strong negative stereotypes of Spanish Republicans, particularly in the French press, but also due to the fact that these same stereotypes vanished rather quickly once people met actual refugees in the border areas. Certainly, the Republicans remained "associated with notions of criminality, banditry, and cruelty", even "barbarism and bestiality" in certain newspapers in January 1939 as they had in January 1936. However, French opinion was not unchanging, and the Spanish tragedy was evidently a cause that both individuals and associations rallied behind[68].

The situation deteriorated to such an extent, nonetheless, that on 5 February the surge of the Republican Army towards France became inevitable, and, based on the distressing report of Álvarez del Vayo, Georges Bonnet finally gave the order to open the border to Spanish soldiers, not without having first negotiated the liberation of some 800 Nationalist prisoners held in Olot and Figueras[69]. It is important to note, however, that this French generosity was highly provisional, in the sense that rapid repatriation of Republican soldiers to the Central zone where the fight-

ing was supposed to continue was foreseen. Moreover, the Spanish Republican headquarters was quite optimistic when it "estimated the forces susceptible of crossing into France at only 60,000-80,000". It remained true, nevertheless, that the need to house the Republican Army could not have come at a worse time, since at the same time the French government envoy, Léon Bérard, had been there since 3 February to negotiate the naming of a French agent in the model of the British, that is to say a *de facto* recognition of the Nationalist government at Burgos[70]. It is understandable, therefore, that Jules Henry, the French ambassador at Barcelona, put strong pressure on Álvarez del Vayo to obtain the liberation of Nationalist prisoners, the condition *sine qua non* for the entry of Republican troops into French territory[71].

In reality, the passage over the border, first for the civilian population, then for the military, signalled not the end of a tragedy, but the beginning of a new one, that of imprisonment in internment or concentration camps improvised by the French authorities, and this after humiliating operations of investigation and sorting, in addition to a forced march which stretched sometimes for 25 kilometres or more. At the town of Argelès, then at Saint-Cyprien and at Barcarès, some kilometres south of Perpignan, camps were built, which were "camps" in name only[72]. As Eulalio Ferrer, former captain of the Republican army later exiled in Mexico said, in describing the town of Argelès-sur-mer:

> In terms of the camp conditions, it was really an open camp. It was a beach, a wet beach. With the Eastern Pyrenees on one side. Month of February, frozen with a cutting wind... So, to sleep there... well... it was quite a feat. A feat that covered us in lice because we stuck together one next to the other to keep warm... so, of course this multiplied the lice and we had lice.

Sixto Úbeda, former member of the Foreign Legion, described a similar situation at the camp at Saint-Cyprien:

> When we arrived at the camp of Saint-Cyprien, there were no lodgings to house us, and we had to sleep on the sand, and those among us who had a blanket, we were lucky to be able to sleep, and we put papers beneath us... There, those who were over the age of 55 died, because they were unable to bear the unhappiness, the ups and downs, the storms, the cold...Each day we buried a number of them in the cemetery which was located facing the camp...The Senegalese, the Algerians, and the Somalians kept watch over us. There, they gave us one loaf of bread, 2 kilos, for 24 people, and we were each given 2 sardines. The water that we drank came from artesian pumps which filtered the seawater, and the breakdown of our stomachs was something terrible, people had to run to the shore to relieve themselves and we would yell: To the Beach! To the Beach! We never lost our sense of humour[73].

Thanks to the pressure of local politicians, prefects and the intercession of the French population, the situation of the 275,000 internees improved little by little in the course of the next months with the creation of new camps with wooden buildings in Barcarès, Vernet, Gurs, Bram, Septfonds, and especially with the release of the first prisoners. In fact, the number of the arrested Spanish refugees diminished to close to one-third of the original figure in July 1939, that is, 95,000, thanks to the incorporation policy developed by the French administration. This policy had, in reality, no direct link with a sudden impulse of generosity or the realization of ill-treatments inflicted on the prisoners. It was simply the consequence of the situation created by the massive influx of Spanish refugees owing to the huge expense of their accommodation, the importance of health measures to be implemented, the growing call-up of civil servants and soldiers; all that in the middle of an economic crisis which never seemed to finish and defensive measures in face of a war that appears more and more certain.

In this context, the enlistment of Republican soldiers in the foreign Legion or in the labour force appeared in the eyes of Prime minister Daladier to be the only resolution for the problem of the financial expenditure that at the same time would assure the replacement of the Frenchmen mo-

bilized by military preparations[74]. The decree issued by the government on 12 April 1939 allowed the extension of military obligations to all foreign men from 20 to 48 years old, but this measure had only limited success because of its non-obligatory character. It was only with the declaration of war against Germany and the French mobilization that the enlistment of the Spanish volunteers was extended with force by civil authorities to all the refugees. As Eulalio Ferrer, a former officer of the Spanish army, relates, many 'volunteers' had no other choice but to join the *Compagnies de Travailleurs Étrangers* (Companies of Foreign Workers, CTE): "Pressure to go back to Spain was very strong and pressure to join the Legion was very strong. Then, we decided to enlist in the working companies"[75].

Within a few months, thousands of prisoners would be released from the internment camps to be incorporated in the CTE, newly created to supply the regiments of military engineers and to replace the mobilized French workers in various areas of the French economy[76]. As a consequence reunified families were separated anew and women too were forced to work in industrial plants and farms, or to work as servants or dressmakers in order to survive.

The Spanish exile was therefore also a political one because divisions and ideological fractures, born during the Civil War, survived military defeat abroad and they even worsened greatly in France. Indeed, important personalities as Manuel Azaña, president of the Republic, and Diego Martínez Barrio, president of the Cortes, as well as the presidents of the autonomous Basque and Catalan governments, had found shelter in France from 5-6 February 1939, shortly after the collapse of the front of Catalonia and the occupation of Barcelona by nationalist troops. It was clear to everyone, except for Prime Minister Juan Negrín and his supporters, that the hope that the war in central Spain would turn into a European war had neither popular support nor made any sense. The installation of the still legitimate Republican government in Toulouse changed nothing with respect to the decision to continue military operations in Spain, but consequently it increased the internal tension between Republicans and moderate Socialists. Partisan quarrels did not cease with the resignation of Juan Negrín from the head of the government, on the contrary. Personal tensions between Republican and Socialist leaders was directly linked with the question of the Spanish refugees and the Republican organizations responsible for the emigration out of France, SERE (or Service of Evacuation of the Spanish refugees), which was tied to Juan Negrín, and JARE (or Junta of Aid to the Spanish Republicans) controlled by Indalecio Prieto, a strong figure who was in open conflict with the former head of government[77]. However, in spite of orders given to the Republican leaders encouraging them to leave the country as quickly as possible, not all could, nor wanted, to leave France.

With the military collapse of France and the rise to power of Field Marshal Pétain the situation of the Spanish refugees deteriorated quickly once again. If the economic incorporation of the Spanish Republicans had increased considerably from September 1939, thanks to the reorganization and intensification of the CTE across the country – they were around 180 at the end of the year 1939 – a new law adopted in October 1940 reinforced the discriminatory measures against foreigners and the return of a large part of the Spanish workers into internment camps. This law came close to legalising persecution, inasmuch as it provided for forced labour for the foreign workers, with no wages and under the strict control of military authorities. Those who had contributed to the reinforcement of the Maginot line on the French border were less lucky, because more than 7000 Spanish workers were imprisoned by the German army and deported to Mauthausen. The majority of them died there in dreadful conditions[78].

The *Groupements de Travailleurs Étrangers* (Groupings of Foreign Workers, GTE) created by Vichy drew inspiration directly from the example of CTE organized by the Third Republic and consti-

tute therefore an example of continuity between the two regimes. Nevertheless, the harshness of the treatment of these – mostly Spanish – prisoners and the military discipline imposed on them, reflected the aversion of the French State for these 'Reds', who were considered responsible for the civil war and misfortunes of Spain. In the autumn of 1940, after their failure in the battle of England, the Germans also learned to exploit this skilled and cheap workforce, and questioned the Vichy government's authority over this human resource. Soon the Spanish Republicans were requisitioned by force by the thousands in the service of the Todt Organization in La Rochelle, Royan, Lorient, Brest or Bordeaux, to work on the construction of the Atlantic Wall or the V1 and V2 launching sites up to the liberation of France in summer 1944. As Guillermo Ródriguez relates:

> So, when there were enough people ["volunteers"] they formed a train and sent us some to La Rochelle, others farther to the submarine naval bases, which were the most important, the first they began constructing before the Atlantic Wall. On our arrival there were dogs, shouting, whiplashes. They took us to a camp that had served for the Vietnamese who worked in a gunpowder plant. We started at 5 am and stayed on the construction site till 7 pm, and sometimes we would come back to the camp only at midnight[79].

Long before the Allied landings of June 1944, and even that of November 1942 in North Africa, the GTEs were the core of the armed resistance, which would give birth to the *maquis* and contribute actively to the liberation of France. The first Spanish groups were created in the autumn of 1940 in Haute-Savoie, Haute-Vienne, Brittany and also in the Pyrenees. The sabotage of industrial plants and technical installations began in 1941, in connection with the French resistance movements and Anglo-American agents. In total, more than 21,000 Spaniards participated in the fight against German and Vichy military forces in France, and about 15,000 served in the Free French Forces (FFL) abroad. Many of them were imprisoned during the war, sentenced to death or deported to Germany and Spain, where Franco took a personal interest in judging and executing prominent Republican politicians: Lluis Companys, the former president of the Catalan government, was stopped by the Germans from falling in the hands of Franco, sentenced to death on 15 October 1940 and executed shortly after. Ironically Manuel Azaña was able to avoid Franco's executioners by dying in Montauban on 3 November 1940, a few days before he was to be delivered to the Spanish dictator by the Vichy government[80].

The collapse of the Vichy government in 1944 and subsequent restoration of democracy in France were seen by the Republican exiles as the preliminary stage for the liberation of Spain. The exiles that fought in the bands of Spanish guerrillas tried to invade Spain through the Val d'Aran in 1944-1945, unsuccessfully, but the hope that the allied powers, particularly France, which owed them so much, would support them in their struggle against fascism allowed them to keep their fighting spirit alive, until the new reality of the Cold War extinguished their illusions.

Even though eventually an estimated 340,000 of the 465,000 Spanish refugees, one way or another, were able to return to Spain by the eve of the military collapse of France in May 1940, it is important to evaluate the action of the French authorities towards the Spanish Republicans from 1936 on, whatever the numbers involved, with regard particularly to the policies of reception. It is obvious that the situation changed considerably during the Civil War. What appeared at the beginning of the war as a limited and controllable phenomenon, due to the massive return of refugees to the combat zones, had been transformed in 1939 into an event of an unprecedented scale. The main question, however, is whether or not this was a foreseeable fact. As we have shown, the warning signs were numerous and repeated, particularly after the fall of the Aragonese front in the spring of 1938. It is hardly possible to speak of an unexpected exodus, even though the actual numbers involved in the end far surpassed the official estimates – both the Spanish and

the French. While Bartolomé Bennassar is of course right that "the first waves of refugees, while of considerable size, were well received in 1937", it is highly dubious to argue that "the Spanish themselves in no way expected such a sudden fall", without even mentioning the responsibility attributed to Negrín's government in this disaster[81]. One would have had to have been either naïve or blind not to see – since the lieutenant colonel stated it repeatedly, as did Ambassador Jules Henry – that the Republican army's resistance was weakening and that a general collapse was highly likely. How can we explain, moreover, that the authorities did not plan the construction of housing camps, at least partially, following the example of the town Rieucros in the Lozère *département*, created by government decree of 21 January 1939? In fact, the answer lies not in any supposed 'effect of surprise', but rather in the conscious refusal to accept the possibility of a massive arrival of refugees. How could it have been otherwise, when the opening of the camp at Rieucros already provoked such sharp hostility in public opinion?[82] In fact, the Daladier government had no desire to provide grist for the mill to a very active extreme right-wing movement, or to further agitate public opinion, which had anticipated the massive arrival of foreigners in France since the beginning of the economic crisis and was increasingly xenophobic[83].

Nevertheless, the impossibility of preventing the human avalanche in January - February 1939 forced the government to take exceptional measures, officially to open 'concentration camps' – according to the official terminology – where hundreds of thousands of Spanish Republicans suffered from lack of food and water, cold, diseases, ill-treatment and, in some cases, died. It was only with the mobilization and severe lack of workers that a large majority of them were able to leave the camps between April 1939 and June 1940, often uniting families which had been dispersed. They would nevertheless continue to be closely watched by the police owing to the 'threat' the posed as Spanish 'Reds'. Their darkest hour occurred in June 1940 with the collapse of the French army and the destruction of democracy under Marshall Pétain. Soon after, the Spanish refugees were arrested again, put into internment camps or deported. The 'luckiest' of them were incorporated into the GTE or hired by private farmers or factory owners to work for the national economy. The 'politically dangerous elements' suffered harsh treatment or were handed over to the Germans; the others tried to survive as they could, with the support of French civilians and priests, who realized how unjustly they were treated.

In a certain respect, it is possible to trace a link between the French republican policy and the actions taken by Vichy France, as Spanish refugees were considered from the beginning to be 'unwelcome' elements, discriminated against as potentially dangerous by a large part of the population and forced to work for the benefit of the national economy. However, the Vichy regime considered Spanish 'Reds' as enemies of the State and treated them as such, condemning many of them to heartless if not cruel living conditions for those who resisted oppression. Their significant and vital participation in the Liberation of France was the result of such hatred and misbehaviour, as well as a chance to prove that the democratic spirit had not disappeared, nor had their will to fight against fascism, French and Spanish, on both sides of the Pyrenees. Paradoxically, the Spanish Republicans were quick to forgive France for the discriminatory policy that they suffered along with Austrian, German and Italian Anti-Nazis from 1939 to 1945 for they recognized in the end that the ideal of freedom, which once characterized France, still existed and that their future was bound to the now restored French republic under the aegis of General de Gaulle.

Notes

1 This chapter's title is taken from that of the memoirs published by the German novelist Lion Feuchtwanger (1884-1958) in 1942, *Der Teufel in Frankreich* [The Devil in France], in which he recounts his internment as an 'enemy alien' in wartime France in 1940. The title ironically refers to the German popular saying, *wie Gott in Frankreich,* that suggests how pleasant it is to live in France.

2 "La Dépêche", 10 October 1934.

3 *Ibid.*, 11 January and 12 February 1936.

4 See Y. Denéchère, *La politique espagnole de la France de 1931 à 1936. Une pratique française de rapports inégaux*, Paris 1999, pp. 58-60.

5 DDF [Documents Diplomatiques Français], Tome III, 19 July 1936, doc. n°1. The quotation refers to the two major Spanish trade-unions, the Socialist oriented UGT or General Union of Workers and the Anarcho-Syndicalist CNT or National Confederation of Labour.

6 J.M. Borras Llop, *Francia ante la guerra civil española: Burguesía, interés nacional y interés de clase*, Madrid 1981, pp. 101-110.

7 *Récit des pemiers jours de la guerre civile à Pampelune par notre Agent consulaire dans cette ville*, Jean Herbette, 23 octobre 1936, quoted in Á. Pascual Bonis, *Los comienzos de la guerra de 1936 en Navarra (Narración de los primeros días de la guerra civil en Pamplona)* in M. Papy (ed.) *Les Espagnols et la guerre civile*, Pau 1999, p. 159.

8 H. Thomas, *La guerre d'Espagne*, Paris 1985, p. 293.

9 Mola did not hesitate to declare on the radio: *Ni rendimiento, ni abrazos de Vergara, ni pactos ni nada que no sea la victoria aplastante y definitiva. Después, si el pueblo lo pide, jabrá piedad para los equivocados, pero para los que alentaron a sabiendas una guerra de infamia, crueldad y traición, para esos, jamás. Antes que la justicia de la Historia, la nuestra, la de los patriotas, que ha de ser inmediata y rápida. De todo eso respondemos nosotros con nuestro honor y, si es preciso, con nuestras vidas*. Quoted in F. Diaz-Plaja, *El siglo XX. La guerra (1936-1939)*, Madrid 1963, p. 227.

10 Quoted in C. Arnoult, *L'accueil des réfugiés espagnols en Béarn et en Soule de 1936 à 1940* in Papy (ed.) *Les Espagnols et la guerre civile* cit., p. 338.

11 "L'Illustration", 12 and 19 September 1936.

12 J. Rubio, *La politique française d'accueil: les camps d'internement*, in P. Milaza, D. Peschanski (eds.) *Exils et migration. Italiens et Espagnols en France, 1938-1946*, Paris 1994, p. 114.

13 "L'Illustration", 22 August 1936.

14 B. Bennassar, *La guerre d'Espagne et ses lendemains*, Paris 2004, pp. 352-353.

15 The orders of C.N.T.-F.A.I. of 25 July state very precisely: 'The shoals of Barcelona dishonour revolution. [...] Let us crush the louts! If we do not make it, it is the robbers who will crush revolution and dishonour it'. Quoted in Thomas, *La guerre d'Espagne* cit., p. 233.

16 G. Dreyfus-Armand, *L'exil des républicains espagnols en France. De la Guerre civile à la mort de Franco*, Paris 1999, p. 34.

17 As Gérard Noiriel notes, the ratification of international agreements did not mean the adoption of rights identical to those of the Frenchmen in the labour market: "if by the law of 28 October 1936, France ratifies the international Convention of 1933, it introduces limitations of size, notably as regards jobs, by stipulating that the refugees will be as other foreigners in France, subjected to the law of 1932 on the protection of labour market. Also, if France accepts the installation of the services of refugees ordered by the League of Nations, she adds that these will not be able to be in charge of the professional investment". G. Noiriel, *Réfugiés et sans-papiers. La République face au droit d'asile, XIXe-XXe siècle*, Paris 1998, p. 114. (This book was initially published with a different title: *La Tyrannie du national. Le droit d'asile en Europe (1793-1993)*, Paris 1991.)

18 The law issued by Louis-Philippe in July, 1839 forbade the installation of Carlists in exactly 28 departments of the south of France. Only a single party of Spanish refugees had had the approval "to get closer of departments of second and of third line on the Pyrenees". *Ibid.*, p. 54.

19 J. Rubio, *La politique française d'accueil* cit., pp. 113-114.

20 "L'Illustration", 4 September 1937.

21 Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand underlines rightfully that Javier Rubio, a foremost specialists of the problem, gave contrasting estimates in two of his major publications (125,000 and 160,000). Dreyfus-Armand, *L'exil des républicains espagnols en France* cit., p. 375, note 45.

22 Bennassar, *La guerre d'Espagne et ses lendemains* cit., p. 356.

[23] "L'Illustration", 17 July 1937.

[24] See for example S. Wolikow, *Le Front populaire en France*, Bruxelles 1996, pp. 210-218.

[25] *Dans sa haine de la République espagnole et tant est grand son dévouement à Hitler, la réaction n'hésite pas à dénaturer* Mein Kampf *qui déclare cependant catégoriquement que « la France abâtardie et enjuivée » est l'ennemi héréditaire qu'il faut abattre « quels que soient ses dirigeants ». Il nous faut dire aussi que la réaction a mené campagne contre l'Espagne républicaine avec de singuliers concours pour essayer de faire croire que le Parti communiste voulait la guerre. On a baptisé intervention ce qui était le souci du respect du droit international, on a baptisé volonté de guerre ce qui était l'expression de la plus grande clairvoyance politique, pour le maintien et le renforcement de la paix. [...] Soucieux du maintien de la paix, c'est-à-dire en particulier de l'indépendance de la République espagnole et de la sécurité de la France, mais également préoccupés du maintien du Front populaire, que les ennemis de notre peuple veulent à tout prix abattre, nous avons proclamé : TOUT POUR L'ESPAGNE RÉPUBLICAINE ! TOUT POUR LE FRONT POPULAIRE!* J. Duclos, *Mémoires. 1935-1939. Aux jours ensoleillés du Front populaire*, Paris 1969, pp.198-199.

[26] P.-J. Deschodt, F. Huguenin, *La république xénophobe, 1917-1939. De la machine d'État au 'crime de bureau': les révélations des archives*, Paris 2001, p. 146.

[27] Rubio, *La politique française d'accueil* cit., p. 114; Dreyfus-Armand, *L'exil des républicains espagnols en France* cit., pp. 38-39.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 150.

[29] See J.-F. Berdah, *La démocratie assassinée. La république espagnole et les grandes puissances, 1931-1939*, Paris 2000, pp. 289-310.

[30] DDF, Tome V, 4, 12 and 19 March 1937, documents n°66, 95 and 129.

[31] DDF, Tome V, 25 March 1937, document n°174.

[32] DDF, Tome VI, 16 July 1937, document n°240

[33] Berdah, *La démocratie assassinée* cit., pp. 314-315; "L'Illustration", 18 September 1937.

[34] F. Martin, *Les Républicains espagnols en Ariège (1939-1945)*, (M.A. dissertation, University of Toulouse II-Le Mirail, 1999), pp. 11-14.

[35] Bennassar, *La guerre d'Espagne et ses lendemains* cit., p. 360.

[36] DDF, Tome VIII, 12 February 1938, document n°150, p. 311.

[37] J. Cubero, *Les Républicains espagnols*, Pau 2003, pp. 37, 40-42.

[38] DDF, Tome IX, 30 March 1938, document n° 89; "L'Illustration", 26 March and 9 April 1938.

[39] É. Bonnefous *Histoire politique de la Troisième République, tome 6, Vers la guerre: Du Front populaire à la conférence de Munich (1936-1938)*, Paris 1965, pp. 213-229, 236-246.

[40] The information chief officer at the Quai d'Orsay, the French foreign ministry, Pierre Comert, went to the point of saying publicly: 'We shall avenge Austria in Spain'.

[41] See J. Paul-Boncour, *Entre deux guerres. Souvenirs sur la IIIe République. Sur les chemins de la défaite (1935-1940)*, Tome III, Paris 1946, pp. 82-83.

[42] Quoted in P. Krop, *Les secrets de l'esprionnage français de 1870 à nos jours*, Paris 1993, 1995, p. 370.

[43] DDF, Tome IX, 25 March 1938, document n°48.

[44] See Bonnefous, *Histoire politique de la Troisième République T.6* cit., pp. 237 and 415.

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 289-305.

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 305-308.

[47] He later defended his position by stating: "If they wanted to stop German expansion really in Europe, they had to finish it with chit-chat. It was necessary to reconstruct in haste the moral and material strength of France, to reinforce its friendships and its alliances. My duty ordered me to forget all my personal inclinations, to get rid of all my hate as of all my ideological priorities, to resist the pressures of an agitated and nervous public opinion, the more or less free and unselfish attacks, to remain firm in spite of all eddies of policy and to guide my action with absolute cold blood and objectivity, letting me – in the middle of so many raging passions – draw away because of one sole mission, the only one that should be legitimate: that of French interest" [sic]. G. Bonnet, *Défense de la paix. De Washington au Quai d'Orsay*, Geneva 1946, pp. 94-95.

[48] Berdah, *La démocratie assassinée* cit., pp. 384-386.

[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 287-289; 386-387.

[50] DDF, Tome IX, 19 April 1938, document n°201.

[51] Á. Viñas, *Las relaciones hispano-francesas, el gobierno Daladier y la crisis de Munich*, in *Españoles y Franceses en la primera mitad del siglo XX*, Madrid 1986, p. 175.

[52] Berdah, *La démocratie assassinée* cit., pp. 395-396; DDF, Tome IX, 31 May 1938, document n°490.

[53] Léon Blum deeply criticized this measure in the editorial of the "Populaire" titled "Anglo-French Action in Spain", 1 August 1938: "Among the explanations which floated around the act of the French government in closing the border of Pyrenees, one of the most credible was the following: if this satisfaction had not been given to the exigent authorities of the English government in what touches the border of Pyrenees, we would not have been able to convince it to stand at our sides during the Czechoslovakian crisis of 20 May; it [the British government] would not have taken in Berlin the resolute attitude which probably saved peace. I would barely need to answer such reasoning. It would be as absurd to sacrifice Spain to save Czechoslovakia as to sacrifice Czechoslovakia to save Spain". L. Blum, *L'Histoire jugera*, Paris 1945, p. 177.

[54] DDF, Tome IX, 19 April 1938, document n° 205.

[55] J. Planes, *Les Français jugés par les réfugiés catalans*, in J. Sagnes, S. Caucanas (eds.), *Les Français et la guerre d'Espagne. Actes du colloque de Perpignan*, Perpignan 1990, p. 392.

[56] Thomas, *La guerre d'Espagne* cit., p. 671.

[57] About the question of the repatriation of foreign soldiers and the abandonment of the Spanish Republic see Berdah, *La démocratie assassinée* cit., pp. 376-422.

[58] J. Ávilés Farré, *Pasión y farsa. Franceses y Británicos ante la guerra civil española*, Madrid 1994, p. 180. France had demonstrated on 23 January ""its non acquiescence in evacuation in France, in Algeria, in Tunisia and in Morocco". DDF, Tome XIII, 25 janvier 1939, document n°422, note n°4.

[59] DDF, Tome XIII, *ibid*.

[60] DDF, Tome XIII, 26 January 1939, document n°430. The following reasons were invoked: "lack of accommodation, supplies, appropriate health controls, of transport, violent and frequent bombings by foreign aviation, machine-gunning of the roads, as well as the circumstances and qualities of the mass of the population".

[61] Berdah, *La démocratie assassinée* cit., p. 421-422.

[62] J. Zugazagoitia, *Guerra y vicisitudes de los españoles*, Barcelona 1977, pp. 507-508.

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 509.

[64] "L'Illustration", 11 February 1939.

[65] E. Salgas, *L'opinion publique et les représentations des réfugiés espagnols dans les Pyrénées-Orientales (janvier-septembre 1939)*, in Sagnes, Caucanas (eds.), *Les Français et la guerre d'Espagne* cit., pp. 186-187.

[66] DDF, Tome XIII, 30 January 1939, document n°463.

[67] Morel writes in effect: "It is really curious that they consider to be a disaster the possible arrival of disciplined troops of which they can make with supervision and sufficient weaponry, very good units of skirmishers. The Italians made three divisions of Iberian skirmishers, with Italian officers. With French supervision, I do not doubt that we can make better". DDF, Tome XIV, 2 February 1939, document n°24.

[68] Salgas, *L'opinion publique et les représentations des réfugiés espagnols* cit., 188-192 ; *L'Illustration*, 18 February 1939.

[69] DDF, Tome XIV, 5 February 1939, document n°41.

[70] See the long note written by Léon Bérard between February 3 and 6, 1939 in DDF, Tome XIV, 7 February 1939, document n°74. Léon Bérard, senator of the Basses-Pyrenees (presently Pyrenees Atlantiques), "did not have enemies", according to George Bonnet, and "was so very known and esteemed in Spain". G. Bonnet, *Fin d'une Europe. De Munich à la guerre*, Geneva 1948, p. 84.

[71] DDF, Tome XIV, 7 February 1939, document n°53.

[72] See G. Dreyfus-Armand, É. Témime, *Les Camps sur la plage, un exil espagnol*, Paris 1995; D. Peschanski, *La France des camps. L'internement, 1938-1946*, Paris 2003.

[73] J. Martín Casas, P. Carvajal Urquijo, *El exilio español (1936-1978)*, Barcelona 2002, pp. 70-71.

[74] See Peschanski, *La France des camps* cit., pp. 28-35.

[75] J. Martín Casas, P. Carvajal Urquijo, *El exilio* cit., p. 79.

[76] See J-F Berdah, "Accueil et mise au travail forcé des Républicains espagnols dans le Tarn (1938-1940)", in "Revue du Tarn", n°207, pp. 449-466.

[77] See A. Mateos, *De la guerra civil al exilio. Los republicanos españoles y México. Indalecio Prieto y Lázaro Cárdenas*, Madrid 2005.

[78] See D., Wingeate Pike, *Spaniards in the Holocaust*, London, 2000.

[79] J. Martín Casas, P. Carvajal Urquijo, *El exilio* cit., p. 112-113.

[80] E. de Rivas, "Azaña à Montauban: De l'asile politique à la résidence forcée à perpétuité", in *Azaña et son temps*, J-P Amalric (ed.), Madrid 1993, pp. 407-437.

[81] Bennassar, *La guerre d'Espagne et ses lendemains* cit., pp. 363, 365.

[82] The newspaper "La Croix de la Lozère", for example, stated on 26 February: "...what could be worse than to be obliged to guard and support a group of thieves whose country of origin no longer wants them and whom we cannot send back! Our beautiful country has become the dumping ground of Europe", M. Gilzmer, "Blanche-Neige à Rieucros ou l'art de créer derrière les fils de fer barbelés", in *Les camps du Sud-ouest de la France. Exclusion, internement et déportation, 1939-1944*, Toulouse 1994, p. 62.

[83] See Peschanski, *La France des camps* cit., pp. 28-35.

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